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Trangressing Time: Imagining an Exhibition of Works by Alanna O'Kelly and Phil Collins

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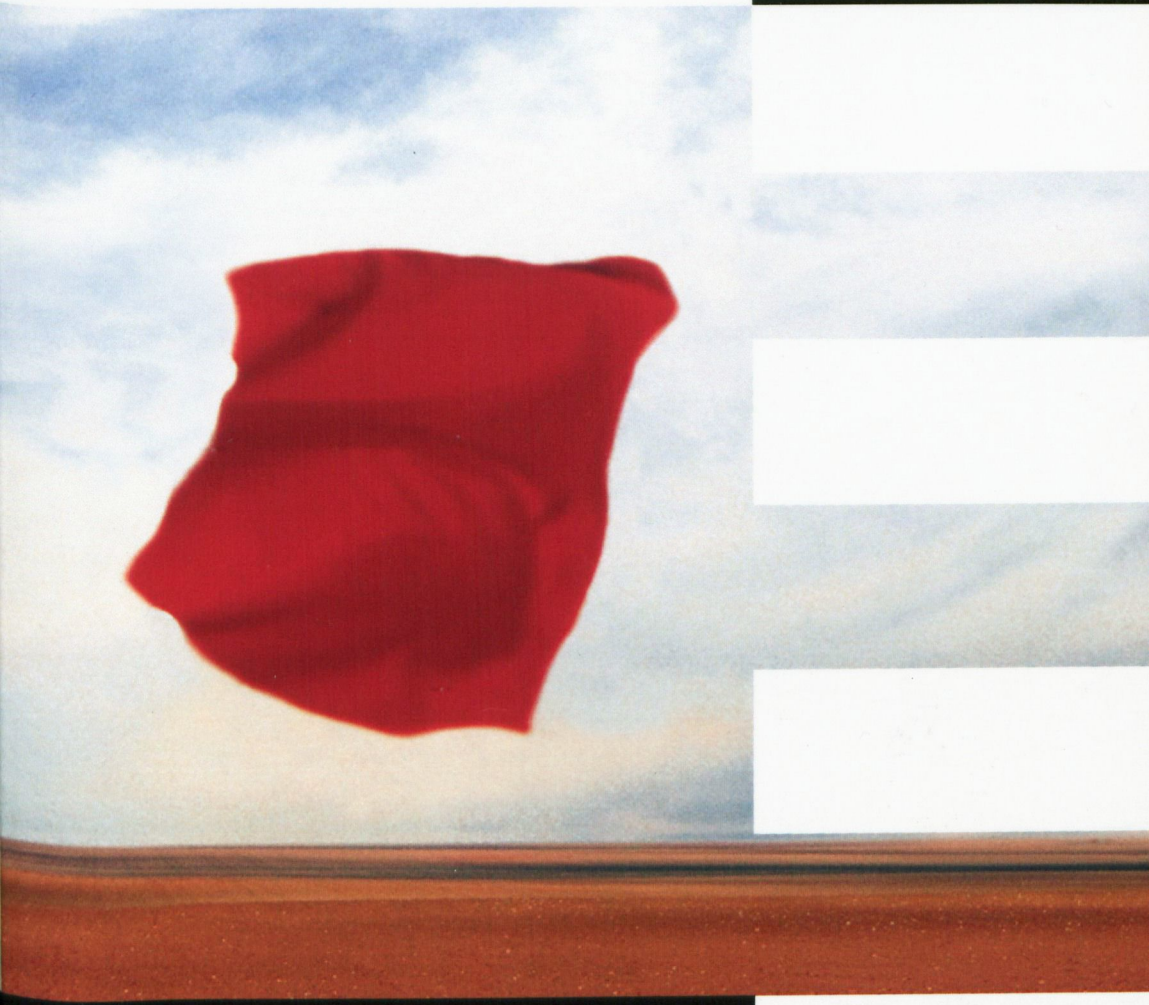

THAMYRIS **INTERSECTING** PLACE, SEX AND RACE

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Art and Visibility in Migratory Culture

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Transgressing Time: Imagining an Exhibition of Works by Alanna O'Kelly and Phil Collins

Niamh Ann Kelly

ABSTRACT

In this paper I propose an imaginary exhibition of two artworks: *Omós* (1994–1995), a sound work by Alanna O'Kelly, and *How to Make a Refugee* (2000), a DVD work by Phil Collins. Through a consideration of the works in relation to each other, I focus on how the connections between social expectations of visibility and practices of representation are in need of constant re-thinking. In O'Kelly's work, she looks to the past for her primary thematic focus, while Collins has overtly conveyed his topic through recent socio-political events. Both works are, in my reading, linked by the common sensitivity of the artists toward the cogency of codes of documentary practice in defining what become the main subjects of representation. In each of these art works, the artists challenge the viewer to question the mediation of collective history and the media of present-day news. Highlighting instability of meaning, mobile subjects and lack of temporal fixity in art transpire as core methods by which O'Kelly and Collins provoke an unsettling experience of art for the viewer. In this, I argue, they suggest a way to foster art practices as a key component of comprehending what it means to speak, at any time, of others and of ourselves.

Introduction

In the memory of art, there exists the potential for all kinds of imaginary exhibitions. Art works resist the static presentation of display in their sustained mobile presence in the memory of the viewer. In this paper, I will explore such a potential in relation to two art works that, to my knowledge, have not yet "met" each other in any gallery

space. The two works I will describe embody an attitude toward the viewer that connects them: a resistance to passive spectatorship. My readings of them are linked by what I see as an interest in thwarting expectations of visualizing identity and are specifically conceived with the aim of disrupting representations of so-called "otherness." Attendant to these aspects of both the works is a context of mobility, which arises on two levels. The artists' own practices of travel have informed their works; and, within each respective piece, the mobility of their subjects is central.

Omós (1994–95), by Alanna O'Kelly, is a sound work that is contemporary in its presence, though its cue—widespread poverty experienced during the nineteenth century in Ireland—is a result of looking back to Ireland's past. O'Kelly's central figure is a poverty-stricken indigenous girl of colonial Ireland. First developed as a performance piece, *Omós* was later recorded as a sound installation following O'Kelly's return to live in Ireland after living in Britain and a period of travel. *How to Make a Refugee* (2000), by Phil Collins, is a DVD work that intervenes with a press photography shoot of a Kosovar-Albanian family at a refugee camp during the Kosovo conflict in 1999. Though the location of Collins's subjects in this work was not Northern Ireland, I suggest that his practice is substantially informed by his having resided in Belfast during the 1990s and his ongoing interest in travel.

Omós: The Invisible Subject

In 1992, Alanna O'Kelly created an exhibition called The Country Blooms . . . A Garden and a Grave, at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, Ireland.[1] This was the first of a series of multi-media works on the theme of the Great Irish Famine, consequences of mass emigration, and wider reflections on the relationship of Ireland's present to its past.[2] As part of this expanding series, O'Kelly developed a number of photo-text works, multi-media installations, and performances. At her 1992 IMMA exhibition a poem was printed on a wall panel:

> *I am twelve years old*
> *I run, barefoot, dressed in an old coat*
> *I see two gentlemen, traveling in a coach*
> *On the road from Leenane to Westport*
> *I run beside their coach*
> *I don't ask for anything*
> *I keep pace with them*
> *They tell me over and over that they will*
> *Give me nothing*
> *I do not ask for anything*
> *I keep my silence*
> *They shake their heads, ignore me, debate*

And argue, wonder at my perseverance
I keep pace with their wheels
I do not speak
I do not look at them
They give me a fourpenny piece
I take it
I turn on my heels and run.[3]

This is derived from an Irish folk story and symbolizes a notion of national pride in a colonized country. The girl represents an oppressed and poverty-stricken people who feel compelled to encounter their oppressor, presented here in the form of a coach and its occupants. Though she wants to make these wealthy travelers aware of her presence and of her impoverished and famished condition, the child's sense of self-respect preempts her inclination to beg directly for alms.

Later, in 1995, O'Kelly created a sound work called *Omós* (the Irish Gaelic word for respect). The central sound alludes to the young girl running alongside the coach. She becomes increasingly breathless as she tries to keep up with the rolling coach wheels. Eventually the listener can hear a coin thrown in her direction. Fragments of a poem are whispered intermittently throughout the work by a female voice, perhaps her mother, and other voices call out encouragement to her. Eventually, the sounds speed up. The carriage moves faster, the running feet patter ever more quickly, almost beyond physical capability. The child's breathlessness becomes louder, the whispering voices grow more urgent, and eventually build to a crescendo in the form of a wordless call, a *caoine*, similar to keening, and the ending of the work's presentation.[4] Jean Fisher describes O'Kelly's use of the caoine:

[A] sonorous call, a rhythmic vocalization without words . . . O'Kelly's lament for the dead returns in Omós as a shout for life. It is, in a sense, an invocation of that earlier, primary voice of the mother, calling upon its nurturing role to re-empower the subject. In this way, the call breaks the spell of enforced muteness; it is an open-mouthed sound that figures the moment when the repressive space is transformed into that imaginative passage where what is infans *may initiate its own narration.* (O'Kelly and Fisher 1996, 14)

The effect of *Omós* is that of a part-witnessed event, a partial glimpse of a tragic situation that leaves questions unanswered: what happened to the girl? How did the travelers in the coach feel when faced with her persistent silence?

Movement as Metaphor

Omós began its aural presence in the world as a performance. On a darkened stage, O'Kelly acted out the role of the girl running, with, at first, only her feet visible in a small pool of light. Gradually as her running and breathlessness gathered pace,

O'Kelly emerged out of the darkness.[5] O'Kelly describes this action as ". . . the magic rhythm of the whole body coming out of this darkness, out of our past" (Deepwell 2005, 144). This performance was recorded and a layering of sounds added, including voices of the girl's family and ancestors calling to her, accompanying her on her journey. The work followed a period during which O'Kelly had developed a number of sound performances based on the caoine and wordless sounds from other cultures, such as the Canadian Eskimos—sounds that she has described as timeless (2005, 140). In this way, by choosing to develop a sound presentation, O'Kelly avoids a direct visual representation of the story that might tie it unnecessarily to a time, and to a place. Further, as Fisher indicates, the child's own wordlessness in the face of inequality gives way to a more primal calling, thereby drawing upon a shared cultural form of vocalization. This form of mourning is then reconstituted by the figure of the girl in *Omós* as an active address to those who look down on her from the coach, recreating the girl's sense of difference on her terms. All this is conveyed through the evocation of overlapping movements: the breathless girl running, the coach wheels rolling, the ancestors' voices urging her through time all converge to constitute a busy aural landscape. These sounds exist in stark contrast to the stillness required for a listener standing in the gallery.

O'Kelly's decision to develop a series of works derived from a consideration of the Irish experience during the famine followed a period of traveling with her work. On returning to live in Ireland, she was keen to address in her art ideas of contemporary Irishness (2005, 140). Fionna Barber emphasizes that O'Kelly's time studying art in London enhanced her sensitivity toward Irish emigrant populations and the complexities of British-Irish relations in particular (2004, 9–10). This context of being and feeling removed from her homeland imbued her with a renewed interest in her identity and a curiosity about the fracturing of Irish identity both at home and abroad.[6] As Ireland experienced considerable emigration as a response to economic recession and widespread unemployment throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s, many young Irish went to work in the UK and elsewhere. So the huge diaspora of Irish, in the U.S., for example, which had been augmented by the nineteenth-century famine, seemed to have a partial echo in the emigration patterns of the 1980s.

Alongside her reflections on the Irish experience, O'Kelly cites watching the news on television during this time as an influence on the direction of her work. The images of contemporary famine and deprivation following civil unrest in various parts of the world appearing in her living room evoked Ireland's troubled past beyond its connection to contemporary Ireland, comprising a more general awareness of poverty, famine, and dispossession. By contrast, in Ireland by the mid-1990s, the advent of economic well-being, known as the Celtic Tiger, was taking hold, with enactments of identity addressed to a nation increasingly made up of immigrant groups.[7] A nation of strangers had finally appeared in Ireland to redress the outward flow over

the last century and a half.[8] And so, the layered movements in *Omós* are contingent on a sense of shifting perceptions of identity in, and looking out from, Ireland. Questions then arise for the listener in the gallery space: which sounds can they identify with; which ones do they hear more clearly? The transition from past to present is metaphorically realized in the representation of multiple movements, through time as well as space.

Recalling History

O'Kelly's specific interest in the Irish famine was informed by the reluctance to discuss it she had experienced among those around her. She characterizes collective memory of the famine as "a very dark place" (Deepwell 2005, 141). One route to this dark place was through the telling of a folk story of Irish poverty. The story of *Omós* exists as a sort of historical anecdote: its veracity may not be minutely proven but the tale is knowable. In her performance and sound piece, O'Kelly called forth and reversed a historical device common in written accounts of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural Ireland, typically provided by personal journals or travel diaries of visitors to the country or those of the gentry class visiting their estates. Margaret Kelleher's research in this area reveals that such visitors were usually from Britain, although some were from America (1997, 16).[9] These diarists often struggled with ideas of "otherness" and the differences between them and the people they encountered, while at the same time constructing this "native other" through their texts. The writer Maria Edgeworth fictionalized her diary in the form of early regional novels (*Castle Rackrent* [1800] and *The Absentee* [1812]), which provide valuable critiques of the effects of social distinctions of the period made between the landowners and their estate tenants. Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch discusses fluctuating attitudes toward the Irish on the part of the visiting British, and gives the example of Charles Kingsley, who wrote that it would be easier to accept the otherness of the Irish were they less similar-looking to the British; if, for example, they were black (1997, 245).

A more recent and subtle approach to describing such an encounter was taken by Colm Tóibín. He conveys a historical sense of Ireland and class difference through a reference to a journey made by his protagonist, a fictionalized Henry James, in his novel *The Master* (2004). In an early section of the novel, as Henry sets out in February 1895 to travel from Dublin Castle to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham across the city, the narrator recounts:

He [Henry] had seen Ireland before, having traveled once from Queenstown in Cork to Dublin, and he had stayed also in Kingston briefly. He had liked Kingstown, the sea light and the sense of calm and order. But this journey now reminded him of traveling across the country, witnessing a squalor both abject and omnipresent. There were times during that journey when he was not sure whether a cabin had been partly razed to the ground or was fully inhabited. Everything seemed ruined or partly ruined. Smoke

appeared from half-rotten chimneys, and no one, emerging from these cabins, could refrain from shouting after a carriage as it passed or moving malevolently towards one if it slowed down. There was no moment when he felt free of their hostile stares and dark accusing eyes. (2004, 25–26)

Reading it as a parallel text to *Omós*, Tóibín's passage suggests that even sympathetic gentry who journeyed through poor rural parts of post-famine Ireland were often looked upon as intruders to those regions. O'Kelly has used this sense of transition through unfamiliar territory in *Omós*, but has reversed the position of the viewer and storyteller. Instead of an account from the vantage point of the privileged diarist or traveler, she presents the silent recipient of that long-standing non-comprehending socially and politically constructed gaze. The chosen form of mediation is not through words, as a diarist might formulate them to conjure a visual description, but rather through a series of sounds that coalesce to produce a sense of immediacy.

In her use of a folk story, O'Kelly emphasizes the role of the narrator as that historically much-narrated figure, an impoverished subject. The voice of an unnamed girl is given direct priority in the printed panel, implying her centrality to the sound work. In the sound elements, O'Kelly places the listener in a situation where they must choose what sounds to identify with—the breathless girl, the coach wheels, the whispering voices. This repositions the folk tale in the present, reconfiguring its performed aspects through a jumble of interpretive cues. What begins as a reading of *Omós* as a retrospective perspective on the history of Irish poverty becomes equally susceptible to processes of personal identification. For the listener, assumptions relating to perceptions of historic class identities are transformed into their present-day experience in the gallery. In this way, beyond the Irish folk context, more universal contemplations on poverty and disempowerment can be drawn from the work. Importantly, redressing the authority of voice, who is telling the stories of history and to whom, is core to the affect of *Omós*. The girl's lack of speech is replaced by wordless panting which gives way to a cry beyond crying. This actively disrupts any potential for a listener to impose a conventional linear notion of history: the work is not simply about the past, but through its form and insistent uneasiness forges a circular sense of past and present. Ultimately, the invisible subject and final wordlessness of *Omós* transcend the historic loss of a poor and female voice.

How to Make a Refugee—The Moving Image

Here we are now, in this instance, the media, discussing the media, disavowing that we are the media. It is evidence of the tyranny of expression that we believe this straight reporting—the controlled zoom on the injured child—despite the instability of the document as a document. How irresistible the visual bleed into filmic discourse! The bereaved tell their story to a piano accompaniment . . . These moments when you

feel: why are they filming? Why are they not doing something useful? These are probably, in fact, the best moments for you too to take up your camera.

Phil Collins (Robecchi and Gioni 2002, 86).

For *How to Make a Refugee* (2000), Phil Collins picked up his camera and pointed it at a family, who in this moment of filming had also become someone else's chosen subjects. Collins joined a camera crew on a news photo shoot of a Kosovar-Albanian family on the Kosovan border in May 1999. This was part of a series of works made in Skopje, Macedonia, and in refugee camps at Stenkovec and Chegrane. Collins positions his camera at a parallel vantage point to that of the news crew. However, rather than simply echoing the actions of the crew, Collins reveals the elements of construction in their taking a photo and the negotiations that lead to producing their final images. The viewer can hear the debates among the crew: Will the boy look better with or without his baseball cap? Should the boy remove his t-shirt and display the scars from bullet wounds on his torso? Occasionally, a hand enters the frame to take a light reading. The family is arranged in a cluttered configuration in the corner of a room, against a window on one side. Those of the middle and older generations sit on a corner sofa, while the younger ones stand or crouch on the floor and two perch on the sofa back. Textures of a disintegrating blue wall, a net curtain, and a creamy fur-like sofa cover are the only evidence of a domestic-style interior location.

Displaced Subjects

By positioning himself alongside the camera crew, Collins acknowledges his participation in the voyeuristic manipulation of the family being photographed. Nonetheless, he is in conflict with the conventional apparatus of popular media and its preferred stories. In this instance, he seems intent on disrupting the reductive severity of subjects associated with so-called portrait images. This imperative is in keeping with much of Collins's practice. His photo and video works self-consciously iterate a broadly speculative account of contentious practices of contemporary reportage.[10] Collins, through his employment of strategies of mass media, seeks to expose their inherent structures of relativities and, further, to question the means by which they produce now ubiquitous subversive images of identities in particular. At a time when the naive notion that there might be an innocent photograph has well and truly been put to rest, Collins, as quoted above, is determined to provoke his viewers into recognizing the political aesthetic of the lens by himself wielding the lens. Furthermore, his work reflects an exigency to disclose the complexities of how and where identity distinctions arise: namely, the struggle between comprehending and distancing the other, as it occurs in and through the popular and news media's construction of subject and viewer. Even the titles of his projects and works reveal this chronic philosophical (and ultimately aesthetic) dilemma: *Becoming More Like Us* (2002), *Bad Infinity* (2002), *How to Make a Refugee* (2000), *Holiday in Someone Else's*

Misery (2001), *Young Serbs* (2001), *Real Society* (2002), *You're Not The Man You Never Were* (2000).[11]

Born in England, Collins lived and worked in Belfast for many years during the 1990s, showing work in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. The influence of Northern Ireland as a site of hyper-visualized identities—both fixed and transitory, and including, literally, parades of identity—on Collins's work is keenly evident in *How to Make a Refugee.*[12] At this time, he developed a series called *The Marches,* completed in 2000, in which he filmed Orange Marches in Belfast and Portadown. Contrary to the images broadcast worldwide of the bowler-hatted marchers and whatever violent interaction might take place at a march, Collins interviewed those watching the marches. He subsequently layered low-level sound recordings of the parties the marchers held around bonfires after the marches. In doing so, he muddied the conventional perceptions of Northern Ireland that were propagated by the international news media.

Currently based in Glasgow, he continues to regularly move out of where he lives in order to make work. He is drawn toward zones of current or recent political discord and civil unrest.[13] His wider art practice reiterates his conviction that we, as readers of the media, are not merely inactive spectators; far from it. In 2001, Collins developed work based first in Belfast, and later in Tirana, Albania, called *Holiday in Someone Else's Misery*. The first part of the project consisted of a line of T-shirts bearing the images of shootings or pipe-bombings in Northern Ireland. He bartered these garments for the opportunity to photograph the wearer, in an uneasy comment on the fashion to visit recent conflict sites as a sort of radical chic tourism. Such tourism takes the form of temporary migrations to places that have hit the world news headlines through stories of war, massacre, or civil unrest. The visits usually take place after the violence has ended. Sinisa Mitrovic describes Collins as a "different kind of visitor," precisely because he "has engaged himself precisely in revealing and subverting the systems of representation that Western broadcast and print media use in dealing with so-called 'danger zones,' including their incomprehensible and often horrifying otherness" (2002, 32).

Collins has suggested that, conventionally, damage as focus of photographic representation is considered more important than violence as a preferred point of entry for a set of critiques around national, cultural, and personal identity. This implies that tangible and visible after-effects of violence or injustice are necessary for a media representation to occur at all. A photograhic report literally needs something to point to. This he understands as contingent to the media's fascination with "the wound, the center, with action over inaction, the visible over the invisible" (Robecchi and Gioni 2002, 84). As O'Kelly wanted to look at a "dark place," Collins too seems keen to reiterate Rancière's conception of artistic practices as "'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and

making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility" (2004, 13). Collins routinely dislocates himself in search of ways of rethinking representations of identities of so-called "others." In *How to Make a Refugee*, he sustains this gesture of displacement by revealing to his viewers how a particular set of identities are represented as a result of this photo shoot, and brings a previously invisible process of imaging dispossessed people into public view in the gallery space.

Remaking the Present

In analyzing the media construction of an image that might "move us" (in an emotional sense), *How to Make a Refugee* insists that those who see it, or perhaps witness it by proxy via Collins, are made to reflect on the nature of news and magazine representations. His interest is in what is not told in the presentation of news photography, as much as in whatever may later become apparent: the moment in which a representation is constructed that will become part of the commonplace currency of how this Kosovar-Albanian family is later visually identified as "refugee." His participation in that moment is distinguished by the fact that though his hand-held camera is mostly static, Collins's work is performed, both in its presentation and in its active interpretation. In this way, it delineates art's potential to step in where the reporter's, and later the historian's, positivism can only fail; pointing to what Collins has termed the "instability of the document as document." Or, to appropriate Rancière's words from his thesis on the relation of art, politics—along with forms of knowledge more generally—to fiction, Collins eloquently reveals that "'the logic of stories' and the ability to act as historical agents go together" (2004, 39).

A complementary issue has been at the heart of discussions on new historicism in art, where, increasingly, traditional distinctions between art history and art criticism are overtly undermined by recognition of the presence and comparative impact of the author in both disciplines. Michael Ann Holly undermines assumptions that might support distinctions between history and criticism when she proposes a "critical history," wherein the object and viewer/interpreter are bound together in the production of meaning.[14] As she outlines: ". . . critical history does not arise spontaneously: it is coupled with the objects about which it speaks" (1995, 84). This suggests that the complex interconnections between an event, the story that describes it, and how it is remembered, are continuously reinvented and narrated through time. Kevin Whelan draws a parallel conclusion in speaking about Irish history when he implies that the teller and tale are sooner or later indistinguishable from each other (2003, 98). In *How to Make a Refugee*, Collins clearly implicates not just himself as an artist but also his viewer as implicit authors of the situation his work presents. By providing an account of the making of an image of otherness, he forces us closer to his viewpoint. It is a fraught observation of both the desire that news and popular

media feeds and the cathartic distancing it casually provides through visual representations such as the ones produced at this refugee camp.

Uneasy with the camera's persuasive power on representative practice, Collins has referred in interviews to its historic role as a diagnostic tool and has also spoken of the implicit violence in organizing a video production (Robecchi and Gioni 2002, 86). These acknowledgements clearly recall the legacy of the language commonly applied to lens-based activity and its endlessly evoked affinity to hunting. In Collins's hands the camera lens continues its acts of trangression: subtly invasive, apparently deceptive. In producing and presenting *How to Make a Refugee*, as in his wider oeuvre, he not only transgresses upon the subjects through representation, but upon the systems of that representation. The formal concern of the moving and changing image is played out in the gallery by the viewer as the necessary completion of Collins's practice. This finally advocates a social vigilance over the real subject of his work, media practices. In *How to Make a Refugee*, as in other installations, he focuses this vigilance by asking his viewers to reconsider how our comprehension of ourselves and others is embedded in culturally prescribed systems of representation. In order to do this, we need to engage in an ongoing remaking of our sense of the present and recent past.

Conclusion

Thinking through these works in an imaginary juxtaposition forces a number of connections between them, as does any exhibition. The shared emphases that are most apparent to me revolve around a heightened awareness of how the movement of peoples routinely generates representations of identity in relation to difference. Coming face-to-face with an "other" or "others" lies at the heart of both these works. Collins and O'Kelly directly bring their viewer and listener to hidden places to actively expose strategies and forms of cultural representation. In this way, these works function as aesthetic practices pointing to a delimitation of the visible and invisible.[15] In *Omós*, by evoking metaphorical associations to reframe the position of storyteller, O'Kelly also reiterates the status of individual art works as socially constructed experiences. O'Kelly does not simply rehearse the language of history, and thereby risk repeating its patterns of misrepresentation. She chooses a multilayered language that displaces time to reconstitute coevalness between past and present, subject and listener, art and its places of presentation.[16] *Omós* offers a newer and more historically differentiating form of imaginative truth that is created in and by the form of the work. Any expectation of definitive representation or revelation of identities is defied as a strategy in *Omós*, as it is in *How to Make a Refugee*. But whereas *Omós* focuses on our perceptions of and through history, *How to Make a Refugee* brings the problematic aspects of visualizing more recent moments of socio-political change and cultural alterity into focus.

For both O'Kelly and Collins, their respective physical migrations as artists is integral to the work they produce. Their travel has informed the identification of their initial subjects (for want of a better term), their consequential choice of art forms, and the means of dissemination of the ideas they present. The figures that inhabit their works are similarly defined by their specific displacements, and are even left unnamed in the process: O'Kelly's girl and Collins's family are known primarily in terms of their locations and movements. An antagonism toward still images, otherwise readily employed by both the artists in other works, is here bound up with ideas of the ordinary or generalized subject. Collins insists that his audience sustains concentration for the duration of taking a photograph in a video presented after the photo shoot. He implies that to understand even the news image, his viewers need to see how it was made. O'Kelly asks her listener to actively imagine a scene of history in the present: here again a single prescriptive image would hardly suffice.

In art's history and art's relationship to history, and in the wider media representation's relationship to the present or recent past, the understanding of time and timeframe are essential components. These works cogently raise uneasy questions about experiencing and engaging with contemporary art. Concepts that history and historical moments of the present are fixed conceptual entities, which art might only reflect on, is blurred by the consideration of temporal distance in these two art works. By presenting works that move beyond respectively, literally, and physically specific representations, and upsetting chronological structures of time to embrace the multiple potentialities of understanding, *How to Make a Refugee* and *Omós* make Fisher's "imaginative passage" a subjectively and collectively possible experience. Furthermore, we, as listeners and viewers, are uncomfortably implicated in these moving subjects; subjects that remain stored in memory to be recalled at any given moment.

Notes

1. The title is taken from a poem, *The Deserted Village*, by Oliver Goldsmith, an eighteenth-century Irish poet.

2. The Great Irish Famine began in 1845 and its direct effect was acutely felt for six years. The failure of the potato crops following repeated blight infestations compounded widespread hunger, related diseases, and death among the cottier classes in rural Ireland. These land workers did not own land, were largely living in severe poverty, and had dietary dependence on the potato as an affordable staple food. Following potato blights, there were widespread forced evictions and emigration. The population in 1841 was estimated to be over eight million (Campbell 1994, 15). By 1851, the population was depleted by over 25 percent (Kinealy 2002, 2), and it is estimated that over a million died, while one and a half million emigrated during this period.

3. This text appeared in printed form in her 1992 exhibition at the Irish Museum of Modern Art and was published in O'Kelly and Fisher, 1996 (National Irish Visual Arts Library).

4. Keening, "caoine," is an Irish traditional form of wailing in mourning practiced by women at a funeral wake, which may last for up to three days. It is similar in practice and sound to the ululation made by women in some African and Arab cultures as forms of mourning and resistance. In Ireland, a small group of women would perform keening at all of the wakes in a region. Caoine is also the Irish Gaelic word for crying, but, as Jeff Kelley describes it, in the context of keening or "caoineadh na marbh" (lament of the dead) is understood as "a crying beyond crying" (1997, 8). Peter Murray writes that keening women "were an important part of Irish funerals, providing perhaps the last living cultural link to the pre-Classical Mycenaean origins of communities on the west coast of Ireland" (1995, 76).

5. The description here relates to a sound piece made from a performance for Hors Limites at the Pompidou Center (Deepwell 2005, 143).

6. O'Kelly discusses this in her "Winter Lecture" (2001). This was part of an annual public lecture series at Irish Museum of Modern Art. Copy of unpublished recording: courtesy of Irish Museum of Modern Art.

7. The term, Celtic Tiger, was first coined in 1994 by Kevin Gardiner, a UK economist, who likened Ireland's economic boom in the 1990s to that of the so-called Asian Tiger economies of Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea in the 1980s and 1990s. A similarly rapid economic growth was fueled in Ireland by large-scale foreign industrial investment, low labor costs in comparison to other European countries, returning emigrants, and low corporate taxes, among other factors. This coincided with, or resulted in, an increase of immigrant populations and an unprecedented growth in property markets, consumer spending, and, consequently, rising inflation.

8. I am cautious with my use of the term "appeared," as we have yet to witness in Ireland whether or not Julia Kristeva's "paradoxical community" is reconciled to itself, as discussed by Declan Kiberd. His text elaborates on aspects and, particularly, shortcomings of multiculturalism in specific relation to Ireland's rapidly changing ethnic and cultural demographic of recent years, and in the context of Kristeva's ideas on "strangers" and "nationalism" (2001, 45–75).

9. Kelleher has discussed in detail how eyewitness famine accounts are fictionalized in William Carleton's *The Black Prophet* (1846), and Anthony Trollope's *Castle Richmond* (1860) (1997, 16–63).

10. Some of my comments in this section are drawn from a profile I wrote on Collins (2003).

11. In his work *Real Society*, 2002, created as part of a curated group exhibition, Frontline Compilations, in San Sebastian, Collins

extended an open invitation for people to come to a hotel room, strip, and have their photograph taken. This was greeted with popular response with many willing participants turning up. The confessional mode within the structure of the work is typical of Collins's penchant for incorporating into his practice strategies that seem at first to obviate wider social and political accounts of his work and its aesthetic. The in-your-face personal and site-specific aspects of this work belie its wider shared implications—a strategy of confusion, which, I argue, underlies much of his oeuvre to date. Writing about Collins's exhibition on 9/11, Enduring Freedom (2002), Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith puts it another way: "It is a testament to the disarming but never irresponsible charm of Collins's work that something so outrageously manipulative [*Hero*, 2002] should also be so genuinely moving" (2002, 189).

12. In Northern Ireland, notably in Belfast and Derry, the painting of symbolic colors, flags, and motifs on pavements and gable ends of houses demarcates various zones of identity associations—for example nationalist or unionist iconography during the Troubles. Liam Kelly discusses art relating to such visualizations (1996, 58–73). More recently, the Northern Irish Arts Council has announced an initiative to paint over many of these gable-end murals, but in the meantime, in Belfast at least, there is a taxi service for tours to some of the remaining murals across the city. Brian McAvera presents another focus on art in Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1994, emphasizing how many artists "bore witness": "it was about the slow, dangerous process of discovery; of opening oneself out, absorbing, reflecting and trying to make a personal response in the midst of a bruised, constantly changing world" (2006, 41).

13. Sinisa Mitrovic raises the point: "it would seem that the undeniable appeal of his distinctive artistic persona is at least partly based on his itinerant lifestyle and the mystery, even exoticism, of places like Belfast, Belgrade, or Baghdad he prefers to work in" (2002, 31).

14. Holly writes: "What the discussion about the gaze in works of art has taught us is that perception always involves a circulation of positions, a process of movement back and forth that will forever undermine the fixity of the two poles, inside and outside. Herein lies the source of an historian's critical artistry. The trick is making what forever will be a provisional metaphorical construction at least partially consonant with that made visible in the reigning artistic metaphors of the period" (1995, 83).

15. Rancière writes of aesthetic practices as: "forms of visibility that disclose artistic practices, the place they occupy, what they 'do' or 'make' from the standpoint of what is common to the community" (2004, 13). I am suggesting that O'Kelly and Collins formulate a disclosure of historical and media representations, respectively, in the art works discussed here.

16. My use of coevalness here refers to Johannes Fabian's discussion connecting the construction of otherness in cultural practices with the problematic situation of historical distance from a subject, and his suggestions of the possibilities of coevalness and the consequences of denying it to others (1983, 38–52).

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Art and Visibility in Migratory Culture

This book explores the idea that art can enact small-scale resistances against the status quo in the social domain. These acts, which we call "little resistances," determine the limited yet potentially powerful political impact of art. From different angles, seventeen authors consider the spaces where art events occur as "political spaces," and explore how such spaces host events of disagreements in migratory culture. The newly coined word "migratory" refers to the sensate traces of the movements of migration that characterize contemporary culture. In other words, movement is not an exceptional occurrence in an otherwise stable world, but a normal, generalized process in a world that cannot be grasped in terms of any given notion of stability. Thus the book offers fresh reflections on art's power to move people, in the double sense of that verb, and shows how it helps to illuminate migratory culture's contributions to this process.

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Title: landscape 1
Cibachrome photography
1998
126 x 195 cm

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